

Today's News - Wednesday, January 11, 2012

- It looks like a rundown Indianapolis neighborhood just might score a touchdown by refurbishing its downtown in time for the Super Bowl.
- Connecticut plans to link its arts funding to projects and organizations that focus on recipients' place-making that will revitalize communities and attract new businesses.
- Lots from the other side of the Big Pond: Moore tours London's Olympic Village and finds "a development of long-distance vision marred by short-sighted [read value-engineered] flaws"; even so, it "shows more thought and quality than most things comparable built in Britain in recent decades."
- Meanwhile, Olympic architects and engineers warn that the London 2012 organizing committee's "gag order" (who knew?) "is undermining job creation and economic growth."
- Heathcote x 2: the Room for London atop Southbank Centre is "surprising, enjoyable and richly layered" with "real architecture, not the slapdash stagecraft of installation" that "makes it an oddly moving experience."
- He's also pleasantly surprised by the "strong entries from architecture" in the Design Museum's Designs of the Year contest, considering it's "a field badly affected by the economic downturn."
- Glancey is veritably smitten by Aberdeen University's new library and its "ethereal air" that will "stop you in your tracks," and "is both icily calm yet restlessly alive, as modern as it is baroque."
- NYC's High Line is set to get a new neighbor.
- An eyeful of SOMs just completed the Al Hamra Firdous Tower, "a quarter-mile-high sculptural commercial complex rising like a giant spike above Kuwait City's skyline" (with "enough limestone to tile the entirety of New York's Central Park") - the peek-through-the-clouds shot is spectacular.
- The jewel-like roof over the Louvre's new Islamic Arts Gallery rises like a "magic carpet" (or perhaps a "golden cloud" or maybe "dragonfly's wing").
- Hoxie explains how his "Passive Passion" documentary came about: he wants "to show how far Europeans have taken the Passive House concept and to show the pioneering American builders who are bringing the movement across the Atlantic."
- Hinkes-Jones makes the case for saving ugly buildings: "Unattractive, Brutalist architecture should be preserved because it's unique, not because it's pretty."
- Heymann's final essay on buildings and landscapes, and the very different ways in which sculpture and architecture occupy the landscape using the "evil, evil grain elevator" (and a whole lot more) to make his point.
- Woodman pays tribute to Metzstein who, along with MacMillan, "were great architects by any measure, but in the scale of their contribution to the development of modern architecture in Scotland, they are without rival."
- A team of architects and academics launch The Morpholio Project, a new digital platform to build a "meaningful conversation, critique, and debate with a global design community."
- Call for entries: Deadline reminder for the eVolo 2012 Skyscraper Competition + LAGI 2012 international design competition for a pragmatic installation for NYC's Freshkills Park + Arhitekton Magazine/Kingspan Architecture Pavilion international competition.

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[Unexpected Benefits From a Super Bowl Bid: The Near Eastside, a rundown Indianapolis neighborhood, is benefiting from the refurbishing the downtown area is undergoing in anticipation of the first Super Bowl to be played in the city...rehabilitating housing, improving the streetscape and diversifying the retail mix.](#) - New York Times

[State alters arts funding, links business impact: Private cultural and arts programs in Connecticut must play a greater role in revitalizing communities and attracting new businesses to receive state funding under a pilot program...will consolidate...funding programs into one initiative; double total funding to \\$3.1 million; hand out fewer but larger grants; and focus on recipients' place-making.](#) -- Project Storefronts; City Bench; Garde Arts Center - Hartford Business Journal (Connecticut)

[London's Olympic Village: ...will be home to 17,000 athletes...and a new community when the Games are over...a development of long-distance vision marred by short-sighted flaws...Reviving the Maida Vale model is often talked about but rarely done...original intentions have been imperfectly followed through...But it is there, a rare example of a planned housing development that, for all its flaws, shows more thought and quality than most things comparable built in Britain in recent decades.](#) By Rowan Moore -- Fletcher Priest; Arup; West 8 - Guardian (UK)

[Olympic companies call for end to ban on promoting work on games: Architects, engineers and technology companies speak out against protocol enforced by London 2012 organising committee...warned that the gagging order is undermining job creation and economic growth.](#) By Robert Booth -- Ken Shuttleworth/Make; Zaha Hadid; Michael Hopkins; Roger Hawkins/Hawkins/Brown; DSDHA - Guardian (UK)

[A Room for London, Southbank Centre: David Kohn and Fiona Banner's architecture-installation hybrid, perched on top of Queen Elizabeth Hall, packs a lot into a small space...it is surprising, enjoyable and richly layered...built with the quality and spatial invention of real architecture, not the slapdash stagecraft of installation...makes it an oddly moving experience.](#) By Edwin Heathcote -- Alain de Botton/Living Architecture - Financial Times (UK)

[Market, homes for elderly and hospital vie for design award: Design Museum's Designs of the Year contest features surprisingly strong entries from architecture -- a field badly affected by the economic downturn...](#) By Edwin Heathcote -- John McAslan; Sergison Bates; Mass Design Group; Hopkins Architects; Zaha Hadid; Foster & Partners; Manifesto Architecture - Financial Times (UK)

[Swirl power: Aberdeen University's new £57m library: ...has put the Silver City back on the architectural map....has an ethereal air...If those exteriors aren't enough to stop you in your tracks, then what about the spiralling off-centre atrium...makes you feel part of an intriguing architectural conundrum: the library is both icily calm yet restlessly alive, as modern as it is baroque.](#) By Jonathan Glancey -- Schmidt Hammer Lassen [images] - Guardian (UK)

[Developers Sense the Time Is Right to Play Off the Aura of West Chelsea: ...a \\$140 million, nine-story office building on property abutting the High Line...hoping to obtain LEED Platinum...](#) -- Cook+Fox Architects [image] - New York Times

[A Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Skyscraper Opens Its Robe in Kuwait City: Keeping up with the everchanging and constantly replaced list of the world's tallest buildings, SOM just completed the Al Hamra Firdous Tower, a quarter-mile-high sculptural commercial complex rising like a giant spike above the skyline.](#) [slide show] - Artinfo

[A Magic Carpet Rises Over the Louvre's New Islamic Arts Gallery: ...innovative, jewel-like roof...the most dramatic change to the Louvre's architecture since I.M. Pei's 1989 pyramid...a "golden cloud"...a "dragonfly's wing." The diaphanous descriptions are appropriate for the roof's design...](#) -- Mario Bellini and Rudy Ricciotti [image] - Artinfo France

[The Passive House Revolution: I embarked on a documentary project to show how far Europeans have taken the concept and to show the pioneering American builders who are bringing the movement across the Atlantic. The result was "Passive Passion"...](#) By Charlie Hoxie -- Wolfgang Feist/Passivhaus Institut [video] - Txchnologist

[The Case for Saving Ugly Buildings: Unattractive, Brutalist architecture should be preserved because it's unique, not because it's pretty...Even horrendously ugly and soulless abominations are part of our architectural heritage and need to be preserved for future generations.](#) By Llewellyn Hinkes-Jones [images] - The Atlantic Cities

The Evil, Evil Grain Elevator: This last of three essays on buildings and landscapes analyzes the very different ways in which works of sculpture and works of architecture occupy the landscape. And how a form which we usually experience as a familiar and even neighborly presence can come to seem evil. By David Heymann – Robert Irwin; Eero Saarinen; Toyo Ito; Mark di Suvero; Gunnar Asplund; James Stirling; Thomas Jefferson; Frank Lloyd Wright; E. Fay Jones; SANAA; Henry Cobb; etc. [images]- Places Journal

Isi Metzstein remembered: "We did not take on board the full dogma of modernism. We wanted to strengthen the vocabulary of modernism wherever it was necessary"...They were great architects by any measure, but in the scale of their contribution to the development of modern architecture in Scotland, they are without rival. By Ellis Woodman -- Andy MacMillan; Gillespie Kidd & Coia- BD/Building Design (UK)

The Morpholio Project: A new digital platform aims to go beyond portfolio sharing and into sustaining meaningful conversation, critique, and debate with a global design community...five architects and academics - Anna Kenoff, Mark Collins, Jeff Kenoff, Toru Hasegawa, and Sang T. Lee - began the experiment with a small collection of collaborators. [images]- Domus

Call for entries/Deadline reminder: eVolo 2012 Skyscraper Competition; cash prizes; late registration deadline: January 17- eVolo Magazine

Call for entries: LAGI 2012 international design competition: submit proposals for a pragmatic art installation for Freshkills Park, Staten Island, New York City; cash prizes; deadline: July 1- Land Art Generator Initiative (LAGI)

Call for entries: International competition for preliminary design of Architecture Pavilion; cash & travel prizes; deadline: April 6- Magazine Arhitekton / Kingspan



Steven Holl Architects: Cité de l'Océan et du Surf, Biarritz, France

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